Fleet Focus

Port Royal morale is high on WESTPAC

By FC1(SW) Shaun Hilton
USS Port Royal

file photo

USS Port Royal (CG 73) Sailors' morale remain high while away from their family and friends in Pearl Harbor. Port Royal departed Pearl Harbor more than a month ago for a six-month western Pacific deployment. The Aegis cruiser joined up with the rest of the John C. Stennis Balttle Group to conduct training and anti-submarine warfare exercises.

Nearly two weeks into USS Port Royal's third Western Pacific/Arabian Gulf deployment, morale continues to remain high aboard the Navy's ultimate Aegis cruiser. The ship crossed approximately 5,000 miles, five time zones and the International Date Line.

After weathering 10-12 foot seas on the first day underway, Port Royal joined up with the rest of the USS John C. Stennis Battle Group. The first item on the agenda was an anti submarine warfare (ASW) exercise. During the exercise, Port Royal's ASW team used all sources available, including the embarked SH-60B helicopter, to locate a U.S. Los Angeles class submarine, which was simulating an enemy sub trying to infiltrate the battle group.

"This exercise went at a slow, measured pace. It would have been easy to get complacent, but we kept on our toes. Our vigilance paid off, and we got the contact. The information was passed on to the carrier, and they prosecuted the sub from that point with a helo," said Sonar Technician (Surface) 3rd Class Sheila A. Dahl, one of Port Royal's sonar technicians.

Over the next few days, Port Royal completed a host of other exercises and evolutions. Ammunition and stores were brought aboard by helicopter during two vertical replenishment (VERTREP), evolutions. A connected replenishment (CONREP) and an underway replenishment (UNREP) helped keep the ship topped off with fuel, and brought on additional stores. The ship's strike warfare team was also given the chance to sharpen their skills during the first week, requiring close cooperation and coordination with the rest of the John C. Stennis Battle Group.

"The exercise went for 72 hours, and was pretty intense. It was excellent training though, especially for some of our newer Tomahawk technicians," noted Ens. Samantha Stahl, Port Royal's strike officer.

On Jan. 20, the big day arrived for 30 of the ship's first class petty officers. Their once-a-year chance at advancing to chief petty officer, the annual E-7 advancement exam, was held that morning. The test determines which candidates will move on to the second phase, board eligibility, by March. After that, the much-anticipated annual chief petty officer selection board is next. It convenes in June. HSL 37 Det One from Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, has also deployed with Port Royal. Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class (AW) Dewayne T. Barnes, the Det's assistant Leading Petty Officer (LPO) took the Chief's exam for the first time this year.

"The exam was quite interesting. I participated in two previous exam cycles, but only for the purpose of submitting a limited duty officer (LDO) package. After thorough preparation for this exam, I feel very positive about the outcome. Preparation and hard work are the keys to success on any exam," he noted.

Another positive note, which came during the first week at sea, was the results of the 1999 Senior Sailor of the Year selection board. Navy Counselor 1st Class (SW) Edna D. Haynie, the ship's command career counselor, was picked from a group of five other outstanding nominees. As the senior sailor of the year, she has earned a Navy, Marine Corps Achievement medal, a 96-hour special liberty, an commemorative engraved ship's plaque, and a special parking spot near the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer parking spots for the next year. Congratulations to Petty Officer Haynie. Port Royal's five other nominees, Hull Technician 1st Class (SW) David T. Jones, Gas Turbine Technician System Technician (Mechanical) 1st Class (SW) Dennis Duarte, Operations Specialist 1st Class (SW) Jay F. Magers, Storekeeper 1st Class Reynaldo F. Azucena and Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Larry R. Stuard, also deserve praise for their nominations.

During every exercise, test, or other evolution the crew faced, Mother Nature made sure her presence was felt. Heavy seas and high winds were the norm for much of the first two weeks. By far the worst of the rough seas came on Jan. 22. The seas averaged 12-16 feet that day, with gusting winds and intermittent rain showers. For the safety of the crew, all weatherdecks were secured the entire day. Due to an exceptionally strong safety program and a well secured-for-sea ship, every evolution thus far has occurred without any mishap or injury.

The last few days at sea saw the USS Port Royal, the John C. Stennis Battle Group and units of Japan's Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) complete a 72-hour exercise. The battle group and JMSDF units sailed the southern route around the Japanese home islands of Honshu and Kyushu.

Finally, everyone here was looking forward to the first stop on this year's deployment in Pusan, South Korea. After two hectic weeks at sea, all of Port Royal's Sailors will welcome a few days respite inport.

Installation Excellence Award winners announced

By Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan and Navy Region Southwest have been selected as the winners for the 2000 Installation Excellence Award, by the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. Thomas Fargo.

Sasebo was named the Installation Excellence winner while Navy Region Southwest earned the distinction as the Regional Excellence winner.

Admiral Fargo specifically cited Sasebo for its prudent fiscal policies, quality of life and quality of service programs.

"Their services set the standard for Pacific Fleet commands," said Fargo.

The approximately 6,600 personnel assigned to Fleet Activities Sasebo and the 27 other shore commands in the area provide vital support to Pacific Fleet forces operating in the Western Pacific and to the eight ships forward-deployed to the area. Services provided to the operating forces include ship repair, alteration, and maintenance.

The winner of the regional excellence category was cited for its efforts during the regionalization process. Navy Region Southwest was also singled out for its process improvement and business practice improvements in shore installation management which lead to improvements in both quality of life and quality of service. Many of these business practices and process improvements have been adopted by other government agencies.

"Their consistent and sincere concern for the 'Sailor' embodies the progressive attitude of this region," said Fargo.

Based in San Diego, Navy Region Southwest is responsible for all U.S. Navy shore commands and facilities in California and Nevada.

SPOT CHECK

The Pacific Fleet today

Personnel:	247,421 • 133,897 USN • 70,006 USMC • 12,848 USNR • 30,670 civilians
Ships:	187 (*)
Underway:	76 (41%) (*)
Aircraft:	1,420 (**)
Exercises:	3
Port Visits:	8 countries

Aircraft Carriers Underway/Deployed:
- USS Kitty Hawk
- USS Constellation
- USS Abraham Lincoln

LHA/LHD Underway/Deployed:
- USS Peleliu
- USS Belleau Wood
- USS Essex
- USS Bonhomme Richard

* — includes Military Sealift Command ships
** — includes USMC aircraft

Frederick welcomes aboard family, friends

By Ens. Kenn Robb
USS Frederick

While USS Frederick (LST-1184) recently took a four day guest cruise to Lahaina, Maui, crewmember's family and friends were given the rare opportunity to observe the underway routine of their sponsor.

Frederick Sailors were standing by at each watch station and throughout the ship to answer any questions that the guests may have had and to demonstrate the responsibilities of each watch station and the capabilities of various equipment for which they were responsible. In addition, guests were entertained during the transit with various activities that included lei making, line dancing, bingo, knot tying and damage control demonstrations. At these demonstrations, visitors not only observed Frederick Sailors in action, but were also able to actively participate and try their hand at the event the presenter made look so easy. Most found the experience enjoyable and informative.

Upon arrival in Maui, guests departed the ship with their Frederick Sailor and ventured out into Lahaina where they were fortunate enough to spend four gorgeous days together.

Once back in Pearl Harbor, loved ones spoke of the new found insight they had for their Sailor's life at sea and of the knowledge they had gained through their active participation.

In addition to the numerous family and friends that enjoyed the cruise, JROTC Cadets from local Radford, Cambell and Farrington High Schools also made the transit. The Navy JROTC Cadets from Radford and Cambell High and the Army JROTC Cadets from Farrington High were greeted with a welcome aboard breakfast and later partook in the sea and anchor detail, a tour of the ship and various interactive damage control displays during the cruise. The Cadets were also given the opportunity to witness and experience the rigorous daily underway routine of the crew that keeps the ship operating safely.

Around the Fleet

Navy MiSSLE program takes flight

Navy flight students are about to get a useful addition to their flight kits. The MiSSILE (Micro Simulator Systems for Immersive Learning Environments) Project CD-ROM entitled, the "Naval Aviation Micro-Simulator Training Aid" became "standard issue" to student naval aviators in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Jan. 24.

The program has a learning "shell" for an off-the-shelf software flight simulator that allows students to configure their PCs to the Navy's flight training environment. The program centers on self-study by the student from home and at computer-based learning centers on base.

The program is meant to be a voluntary training aide and not a required part of the syllabus. The PC-based flight simulation software will not replace actual or simulated flights, instead, it is meant to build a foundation of procedural knowledge and aircrew coordination. Flight Training Instruction (FTI) and course rules, used for teaching the student flight procedures are embedded in the shell. This allows students to spend their flight time in the aircraft developing practical skills as opposed to applying the procedures for the first time.

The software is currently configured for the primary trainer, the T-34C "Turbomentor", and the intermediate training aircraft, the T-44 "Pegasus". Programs are being considered for development for the Joint Primary Aircraft Training System (JPATS), the T-6A Texan II, that is scheduled to take over as the primary flight aircraft. A study conducted at the learning center in Corpus Christi showed that students who used the software scored higher on their flights and had fewer below average and unsatisfactory scores. The program also allows students who are experiencing difficulties to focus on problem areas by using the PC-based simulator. Statistical and anecdotal evidence suggests that these students performed better in the problem areas, especially in the aircraft.

The missile project began as a study by the Assessment Division of CNET to determine how off-the-shelf (OTS) software could be used as a training tool for various warfare communities. The flight simulation program got its start when one enterprising Ens. at Aviation Preflight Indoctrination in Pensacola began modifying panels and scenery for a commercial PC-based flight simulator on his own. Ens. Herb Lacy, who has since been promoted to Lt. j.g., used commercially available add-on software to model the aircraft panels and scenery after NAS Corpus Christi and the surrounding area landmarks where he would be flying during primary training. The Assessment Division at CNET used Lacy's aircraft panels and scenery as the basis for the learning shell that will be issued to students. The use of off-the-shelf software greatly reduces software development costs by taking advantage of software that has been developed for sale in the commercial marketplace.